1: Powdermaker E-3 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

near enough for her to see them, and she may thus become aroused. She then sits down and bends her right leg so that her heel presses against her genitalia. Even young girls of about six years may do this quite casually as they sit on the ground. The women and men talk about it freely, and there is no shame attached to it. It is a customary position for women to take, and they learn it in childhood. They never use their hands for manipulation.

I am not so sure of the degree to which masculine masturbation exists. I never witnessed it, and my information on the subject is of a contradictory nature and not thorough enough to be of any value.

It is known that some people like sexual intercourse more than others, but I heard of no one who indulged to such an extent that they might be considered abnormal. One married woman who was supposed to like it excessively was thought "mad." She was unable to talk, and could only make meaningless sounds, having been that way since infancy, and she was not thought to have much understanding. It was her custom to show how much she liked intercourse by putting the index finger of one hand through a circle formed by the thumb and index finger of the other hand. This method of indicating one's desires was considered to be the manner of a "mad" person. There is only one folk-tale about a woman who died from excessive intercourse. Sexual perversion scarcely exists.

LIFE HISTORIES

The following accounts are those of middle-aged and old women (unless otherwise indicated), and are concerned primarily with their sexual life. Other events of their life followed the traditional cultural pattern.

Nunda was born in the hamlet of Penguli, and had the

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

159 usual early childhood. While she was still very young, Limboisa, who was married to her sister Leipa, wanted to be betrothed to her, but he was not accepted.[1] Her parents died in her childhood, and she went to live with her maternal uncle in the bush village of Ponanwiukok. She came back to Penguli, however, before she reached puberty, and then Towi asked to be betrothed to her. He talked to all her clan relatives, and they gave their consent. Then Nunda went to the hamlet of Panat and lived with Towi's mother, Toras. Shortly after this her first menses appeared, and there were the usual rites, followed by the marriage ritual.

159 837 Then her married and sex life with her husband began. Shortly after her marriage she began to go to the bush with her lovers. About once a month was the average. I could not find out the exact frequency of her relationship with her husband, but it was evidently according to desire. Two of her children, she told me, were the children of two lovers, and she knew this because of the resemblance between them and the children. Towi knew it also, but was not cross. She added that he liked the *tsera* which he had received from all her lovers. He later took another wife, known as wife number two. She died some time ago and had no children.

159 888 Nunda never ate either the sterility or abortive leaves, and has had four children, only one of whom is now living. To-day she and her husband live in Panat (her husband's hamlet), where her daughter, who is married and has two children, also lives. Towi is too old to clear ground for a garden, and so they do not have one. But Nunda can still plant taro, although not quite so vigorously as the younger women. She assists her own daughter, Kokala, and her husband's brother's daughter, Pulong (of her clan), in their gardens, and these two women and their husbands look after the old couple. Should anything happen to Kokala and Pulong, their children would look after Nunda and Towi.

[1] Why, I was unable to find out.

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

When Nunda was ill (during my visit) her husband was a model of affectionate concern, and Kokala, Pulong, and all the other women of her clan looked after her. She recovered.

Tsangamor was born in the hamlet of Onel. Before her first menses she chewed the sterility leaves which an older woman gave her. She said that after chewing the leaves her stomach "dried up," and that she therefore could not have children.

She had no sexual relations before her first menses, and when they occurred there was the usual feast. But she did not marry at this time. Instead she had many lovers in the bush. She lived with one man from Tabar for some time, and he gave her four *tsera*. Finally he went back to Tabar. Her other lovers gave her one *tsera* each time she went to the bush with them. As she had no husband, she kept all the *tsera* for herself, and acquired a basket full of currency. As far as I can make out, her lack of a husband was due to her not wishing one.

Then later she deemed it wise to have a husband. Her value as a potential wife had in no way diminished because of her previous lovers. She now married Landow, with whom she had no sexual intercourse before the marriage rites. He made the usual payment of five *tsera*, pigs, and gifts of fish and bananas to her mother and two sisters, and also as was customary worked in her mother's garden. This marriage took place about a year or two after her menses. Landow came from the hamlet of Panat, and after his marriage lived in his wife's hamlet, Onel.

This marriage lasted for about three years, when Murrow from the village of Langania came along and took her away from Landow. Tsangamor told her husband that she did not like him any more, and that she did like Murrow. Landow was not cross, and said, "All right, you go." Murrow now

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

159 587 paid Landow five *tsera* and gave six *tsera* and a pig to his wife's mother. This marriage lasted until Murrow died, an old man. Tsangamor said that she did not have any lovers after her second marriage. She explained that when she 159 married Landow, she was very young and went to the bush often, but later when she married Murrow she was much older, and, she added, she liked Murrow. At the latter's death Tsangamor was fairly old and did not remarry, nor did she have any lovers. She now lives in Panat with her sister's daughter. She has never had any children, and she attributes her sterility to the leaves she ate when a child.

To-day she is a tall, straight, very fine-looking old woman, with regular features and bright, intelligent eyes. She is still a good worker, and full of energy, fun, and gaiety. She is an active participant at all the women's gatherings, communal cooking, dancing, etc.

Murra was born in the hamlet of Sapone and had the normal childhood, working in her parents' garden, etc. In early childhood she was betrothed to Teramae, and the marriage rites were held after the first menses rites. Teramae paid six *tsera* to her maternal uncle.

159 837 Her husband was the first man with whom she had sexual relations, but after marriage she had many lovers. During the day she went to the bush with them, but sometimes at night it was in her house, while her husband slept in the men's house or was out on an affair of his own. There was no regular periodicity for intercourse, but it was approximately a couple of times a week. She had no intercourse when pregnant, nursing her child, or when menstruating. She has four children, all boys.

159 587 Teramae died in middle age from a sickness connected with his leg, and now Murra married Luasaw. She had no sexual relations with him previously. He had been away working on a plantation, and when he returned after

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Leau

Teramae's death Murra told him that she would like to have him marry her and look after the children. At first Luasaw did not want to marry her, because she was so much older than he. But all his relatives urged him on, saying that Nunda would give him plenty of pigs, which she did. Then he paid four *tsera* to her brother and they were married. After four or five years Luasaw died, also of an illness in the leg. There were no children by this marriage.

She did not remarry, and now lives quite happily, to all appearances, with Mamus, her sister's daughter's daughter, who is a classificatory granddaughter. Murra is still able to work in the garden, and is an active member of the community.

Molung is a young woman, probably in the late twenties. She was born in the hamlet of Penguli, and had the usual childhood. At her first menses there were the traditional rites, after which came her marriage to Manaumat, who paid five *tsera* to the following clan relatives: her mother, her mother's mother's sister's two sons, her brother, and her sister. Her father as usual received nothing. Her husband came from the hamlet of Sapone, and after the marriage they both lived in her hamlet of Penguli, where he built a house.

She had no sexual intercourse before marriage, and after it she had many lovers. She remembers six lovers well, and others whom she cannot recall. She has intercourse with her husband a couple of times a week. She did not eat either the sterility or abortive leaves, and has had six children, two of whom died in infancy. One is married, and the other three are still young and living at home. They are all betrothed. Molung seems to be living a quiet, untroubled life.

In Kawitti's life there was more contact with white culture. She was born in the hamlet of Tarengam, and her father died when she was an infant and her mother when she was

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

159 a very young child. She then went to live with a grown-up brother and his wife.

159 836 At the appearance of her first menses there were the customary rites, but she did not follow the usual rule of marrying directly afterwards. Instead she went to the bush with a lover, who gave her one *tsera*. Then she had another lover, with whom she went to the bush three times. Her third lover was Lumis, with whom she went to the bush four times and then married. She was pregnant before she married him, and later her child was born. A few years after this she and her husband went to Rabaul to work for the white man, and there Lumis died.

159 837 Kawitti stayed on at Rabaul, working for the white man, and during this time she had intercourse with many native men and one white man.[1]

After three or four years she came back to Lesu and had Lungas as her lover. They were married, and he gave the marriage payment to her clan relatives.

159 Kawitti said that she did not eat the sterility or abortive leaves because she was afraid. She had heard of one woman who died after eating the sterility leaves. She occasionally missed her menstrual period for two "moons," but it always "came up" on the third moon. She has had one child, a son, now married. She says that in the past she enjoyed copulating very much, but that now she is old and does not care for it.

She was still able to work in the garden, and did so, although suffering from a disease giving her leg pains, which diminished her activity at certain times. She was of a rather pleasant and very talkative disposition. She died unexpectedly while I was at Lesu.

Pulong had the traditional childhood, during which her

[1] When I asked her if she enjoyed her sexual relationship with the white man, her only answer was that he paid her "plenty."

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM19
Lesu

present husband, Ongas, was betrothed to her. He brought a gift of food to her mother and other clan relatives, who then gave their consent to the betrothal. Pulong a little later went to stay with her betrothed's mother. Ongas, of course, slept in the men's house.

At her first menses there were the customary rites, followed by the marriage rites and payment. He came to live in her hamlet, where he built a house for them.

After marriage she had many lovers in the bush, so many that she has lost count of them. There were no intrigues lasting any length of time. Her lovers all paid *tsera* to her, which she gave to Ongas. Sometimes he was cross if she had a lover, but at other times he was complacent. The latter state of mind was the more usual for him.

Ongas took a second wife, but later divorced her because he was afraid of the missions.

Pulong and he worked on the mainland of New Guinea (during the German administration). When their working time was up they returned to Lesu, and now say that they will never leave it. Pulong has one daughter now just past puberty. She has had several other children, all of whom died at birth or shortly afterwards.

To-day she and Ongas live an affectionate and what appears to be a quietly happy life.[1] She is busy and gay, fond of gossip, and a leader in communal undertakings. One might speak of her as one of the "first ladies" of the village. This comes partly from her husband's position of Luluai, but also from her own very pleasant personality.

The life history of Taiti, one of my servants who was with me in the beginning of my visit, is an unusually sophisticated one, due to her contact with white people since her early childhood. Her parents worked on a plantation, where she

[1] The affectionate care given by Ongas during Pulong's illness has already been described.

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

was born. They both died in her early childhood, and she continued living on the plantation, very much the protégée of her "master" and "mistress," owners of the plantation. She slept in their house, and her "mistress" locked the door to Taiti's room every night, so that no men could have access to her. Taiti was carefully guarded according to white standards, and for a time, therefore, had nothing to do with men. Then one man working on the plantation made love magic to get her. He recited a spell over an aromatic leaf, which he then wore, and the wind blew the fragrance of the plant to Taiti, and then she was in love with him. Taiti told her "mistress" that she wanted this man, and so the two were married and continued working on the plantation.

This marriage only lasted a short time. There was a divorce and she remarried. She became pregnant now, and near the end of her pregnancy another man wanted to have intercourse with her. She refused because she was pregnant, and he was angry at the refusal. The would-be lover made magic of revenge over a betel-nut which he placed by her door. Unsuspectingly she walked over the nut, and as a result, she says, the child died in her womb. (The child was born dead two days later.)

Taiti later became friendly with a half-caste Chinese-Melanesian in Rabaul, who seduced her with love magic. This consisted of putting a leaf over which he had said a spell in a glass of beer which he gave her to drink. It was her first taste of beer, and that night she dreamt she was having intercourse with him, and the next day she desired him. Before he had made advances to her, but she had always rejected him. Now she went to him.

From now on she had many husbands and even more lovers, but she had a special fondness for the Chinese half-caste.

She is now middle-aged, and says that she is through with men. But this is obviously just "talk." She is very vain,

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

although she is not good-looking by any standards, native or otherwise. While she works she usually keeps a small mirror near by, into which she constantly looks. She has a peculiarly elongated face with a projecting chin. One man whom she had angered, rather aptly said that her face is like a horse. She replied that one gets a face from one's father. She had one father, and so has his face. Her tormentor had another father, and therefore another face. But although she gave this reasonable retort, her vanity had been deeply hurt, and she never forgave the man.

Her disposition is warm and impulsive, quick to anger and easily appeased. One day a wild bush pig strolled into the village, and at the request of many of the natives my cook-boy shot him. At the report of the gun Taiti burst into tears. Later she was twitted on her tears, and she replied that she was sorry for the pig.

She lies rather frequently, but has a subtle distinction of her own. She refers to one man who lies, and says that he looks you straight in the face while he lies. But, she continues, when she lies her "eyes run away," and so her lies are not so bad. As a matter of fact they are more in the nature of small fibs.

She is ambitious and wants to do things that native women never even think of, and is always making plans about how she will help me in my work, drawing up elaborate schemes of what she will do. But finally she has to leave to join a half-caste husband.

She is a type all her own, and a peculiar product of white contact.

SUMMARY

The brief life histories are of interest in that they show somewhat the variations occurring within the general pattern. It is the rule that marriage rites follow immediately after the

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

159 183 rites for the first menses. But individuals do not always follow this rule. Some women delay it for a short time, and personal choice only may be the reason for the delay, or there may be some external circumstances causing it. One woman has one husband for life, and another changes mates several times. And so on.

Since there is variation within the general pattern of life, we might be expected to find a large degree of it within the sexual life, which while it grows out of fundamental biological impulses is overlaid with so many diverse sentiments. Here we find no simple and perfectly logical system. Instead there are contradictions, variations, complexities, and simplicity too. Even the structure is not rigid. We find monogamy, polygamy, and polyandry. There are repressions—half the women are forbidden to the men—and at the same time there is the freedom of extra-marital intercourse. Affectionate fondness in family life is common, and wife-beating also happens in the same family. The sentiment of jealousy is sometimes present and at other times absent. Some unions last a lifetime, and others are quickly broken up. No logical non-variable scheme is found here.

But one may abstract a few generalities which have a more or less universal application. There is first a keen enjoyment in sexual intercourse, which begins almost immediately after puberty, and which is indulged rather freely within the limits of the rule of exogamy. Marriage is to rear children and to maintain a household. If it is not maintained, if either partner neglects his economic duties, divorce occurs. But the family is something more than an economic unit. For divorce also occurs when one mate has tired of the other and prefers or is in love with someone else. There is love, or whatever we call that group of sentiments which surround the biological need for intercourse. A woman in love is lost to the world; she neglects her everyday duties, and thinks and dreams of no one except the beloved. All

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

of which is not so different from the picture of a woman in love in any other part of the world. Beside love and passion, there is also affection, which is seen in the relationship between mates, and which comes out so clearly in times of illness or other crises. Thus in the sexual life of these Melanesians occurs the interplay of instincts, emotions, and sentiments which appear to be universal.